

# *Al-Baiyyinah*

April – June 2008 Issue

**LIFE AND SUNNAH OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)**

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## **Editorial**

By the grace of Almighty Allah (SWT), we are very happy to publish another issue of Al-Baiyyinah on the issue 'Life and Sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad (SAW)'.

What would be more relevant than the Life of our dear Prophet Muhammad (SAW), whose life is the most radiant 'light house' for the Muslim Ummah! Though there have been many books, magazines, journals, and articles published on the life of our beloved Prophet (SAW), there can be no 'end' to discussing his life. We all know that Muhammad (SAW) led an eventful life; socially, politically and religiously. He was a living demonstration of the Quran for the Muslims of his time. For us, his life needs to be thoroughly analyzed to understand and to learn from his actions. A small magazine of a few pages is, in no way, enough to discuss his whole life, not even a stage of his life. However, as a victim of 'modernization', today's Muslim Ummah is in dire need of remembering his life and his teachings. There is no other solution to our problems, but only in the teachings of his life.

This magazine includes articles, mainly collected from the many articles available in the Internet. Though it was not possible for us to cover every stage of the celebrated life of the 'Mercy to the Worlds', we made our sincere effort to give an insight into his overall life. We selected our articles with youths as the target readers. Today's youth, being submerged in 'modern day problems', are one of the most vulnerable sections of our society. We believe the teachings from the life of Muhammad (SAW) can provide solutions to their problems and can help them realize the true meaning of life. Hence, there is no alternative, but to reach the youth more frequently using all advanced technologies, to remind them of the teachings of Islam.

We refer the readers to read April – June, 2007 issue of "The Message International" on "MUHAMMAD Mercy to Humanity and Beyond..." published by Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). This issue has covered five excellent articles on the Prophet's life along with a review of "In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad", authored by Tariq Ramadan. Note that the write-ups in this magazine reflect solely the opinions of the authors.

We express our deep gratitude to everyone, who has contributed to make this magazine a reality. We humbly request all readers to disseminate this issue to as many as possible and try to contribute for the coming issues. May Allah (SWT) – the Most Beneficial and Merciful, guide us to the truth, forgive us and accept our humble efforts for the sake of His Deen.

*Editor  
April, 2008*

## Prophet Muhammad: The Best Example for Youth Today

*Idris Tawfiq*

*Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets, and Allah has full knowledge of all things. — Al-Ahzab, 33:40*

Young people today see a lot of pomp and ceremony when it comes to politicians and leaders. It seems as though the more authority you have, the more the red carpet is laid out, the more special attire and finery you are expected to wear, and the more freedom you have to express your opinions.

But how is this scene different from what we used to see of the final Prophet (SAW)?

"Which one is Muhammad?" So humble was the Messenger of Allah (SAW) that strangers looking for him in the mosque in Madinah had to ask this. Sitting in the row of believers for the daily prayers, Muhammad (SAW), with his simple and modest bearing, could not be distinguished from anyone else.

He was so calm, so dignified, and so peaceful that no one could single him out as the leader. Children and youth could approach him to receive a warm greeting or to ask this great, yet humble, man a question or some advice. There was no sign here of the great warrior, the skillful negotiator in times of war and peace, the statesman. There was no sign either that this was the man, from among all men, was chosen to receive the Creator's final message to mankind.

He was like every Muslim who enters the mosque to pray. And yet, unlike any other Muslim, he had been chosen as the Seal of the Prophets, the most honorable and the noblest of men. He was the one whom Allah selected to guide all mankind.

### Disadvantages in Youth

Orphaned by the age of 6 and born in a relatively unimportant region of the world to a simple family, Muhammad could neither read nor write. When commanded by the Angel Jibreel to recite the first glorious verses of the Qur'an, Muhammad could only respond that he was unable to read or recite them. Having neither power nor wealth, Muhammad (SAW) possessed none of the things that the world considers important. Yet Allah chose him from all men in the world to be what the Qur'an calls "a mercy to mankind."

### A Mercy

In his person, the Prophet (SAW) was a mercy to all the people on earth. One so kind, so pious, so devout in prayer and obedience to the will of Allah had been chosen as the guide for mankind. This is the role that young Muslims today, being the standard-bearers of the message of Muhammad (SAW), should take on in this world that is so full of turmoil and hate.

We should ask ourselves, how closely are we living our lives according to the message of Muhammad (SAW)? If today's young Muslims join in the ranks of the followers of Muhammad (SAW), they will be joining the ranks of the merciful, pious, and just people through all the ages, from the beginning of time. Indeed, Allah opens the way for those who sincerely obey Him and His Messenger.

## **Friends**

The Prophet (SAW) was always surrounded by people who sought the pleasure of Allah. Ask yourself: Who do you mix with and why? Your friends reflect who you are.

At the end of his life, Muhammad (SAW) was laid to rest in the earth. His body, instead of being laid to rest in some grand tomb as one might expect for so important and so influential a man, was placed in the earth beneath the spot where he used to sleep on a simple mat. Among the, it fell upon his close friend Abu Bakr to deliver the funeral sermon. At this key moment in the development of Islam, his words to the heartbroken Companions were filled with wisdom. "O men," he said, "if anyone worships Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad is dead. But if anyone worships Allah, then know that Allah is alive and will never die."

## **Only Human**

Abu Bakr (SAW) told the Muslim faithful that Muhammad (SAW) was the greatest man to have lived but he was not the Lord of all creation. He was a man like all men. And this is what makes Islam so extraordinary. The love and reverence which the two billion Muslims today have for Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is both real and deep. We see him as the gentlest, the kindest, and the sweetest of men, and yet he remains for us precisely that: a man, neither a god nor a saint. We see him as a simple man, chosen from among men, with the same cares and worries we might have.

But in Muhammad (SAW) we see that it is possible for us to dedicate all our lives to Allah and to live under His guidance, yet live in the midst of life. Prophet Muhammad showed us by his life and example that Islam is the perfect way of life and that it is possible to achieve happiness by following this way.

## **Something Special**

In Islam there are no priests or popes. That, perhaps, is the secret of Islam. There is no special knowledge reserved for a professional religious class. There are no go-betweens between the Creator and the created.

Islam is ours for the taking. How many of us reach out and take what Islam has to offer? How many of us are shining examples of mercy and justice that Islam can develop in us? Each of us can fall prostrate before our Maker and say what we need to say without the help of anyone else. Just you and your creator! We can see this clearly inside any mosque. Muslim men and women, each in their own place, gather in the mosque for the five daily prayers. Although they pray together as a community, in congregation, receiving blessings for doing so, each Muslim is concerned with speaking to his or her Lord individually. It is perhaps this, more than anything else that makes the place of Prophet Muhammad so strong in the heart of every Muslim.

Muhammad was a man and he found it possible, with Allah's help, to live out every requirement of Islam. So if we try to do the same and, with Allah's help, we can live out our faith like our beloved Prophet.

[British Muslim writer **Idris Tawfiq** was a Roman Catholic priest before embracing Islam. You can visit website at [www.idristawfiq.com](http://www.idristawfiq.com)]

[Abridged from an article taken from [www.islamonline.net](http://www.islamonline.net)]

## The Youth Outreach Program of Muhammad (SAW)

*Ibn Abee Omar*

The dilemma of dealing with the youth is something that affects the whole global Muslim Ummah today. While we have many programs geared towards the youth, it seems many of them are unsuccessful. What is the correct approach to dealing with them, as shown by our Prophet (SAW)? It is something obvious, yet ignored, that there is in fact a prophetic methodology to dealing with them.

To learn the Prophetic method of interacting with children, we must pay special attention to those *ahadeeth* in which his interaction with them is highlighted. Although we are used to benefit from the following familiar narrations, we never step back and put these narrations in the context of the experience of the actual narrator – who was oftentimes a youth:

1. *Abu Qatadah reports that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) was offering Salah and Umamah bint Zainab was on his neck [shoulder]. When he performed Ruku', he put her down, and when he got up from his Sajdah, he would place her back on his neck. 'Amr inquired during which Salah this happened. Ibn Juraij said that it is related from Zaid ibn Abu 'Atab from 'Amr ibn Salim that this happened in the morning prayer. (This is related by Ahmad, anNasa'i, and others)*

Al-Fakihani comments: "The purpose behind the action of the Prophet of carrying Umamah in the Salah was to set an example before the Arabs who considered having daughters and carrying them around as something bad or shameful. The Prophet Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam acted differently from them, making something clear by example is much more effective than a mere precept."

2. *Anas was a small child when he was given as a servant to the Prophet (s). About his time there, he narrated that, I served the Prophet for ten years, and he never said to me, "Uf" (a minor harsh word denoting impatience or displeasure) and never blamed me by saying, "Why did you do so or why didn't you do so?" (Bukhari)*

The perspective that we usually overlook from this Hadith is the **lasting memory of a lifetime** of this on a 10-year-old boy for his entire life. He will remember never being criticized and always being treated with kindness, compassion, and patience. As a result, we know what he grew up to be.

3. *Abdullah ibn Abbas was a famous scholar among the companions, who was only 13 when the Prophet (SAW) died. He is the scholar who learned the whole Qur'an, which indicates who were in the constant company of the Prophet (SAW). He narrates:*

*One day I was behind the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) [riding on the same mount] and he said: O young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]: Be Mindful of Allaah and Allaah will protect you. Be Mindful of Allaah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allaah [alone]; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allaah [alone]. And know that if the Nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allaah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you*

*with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allaah had already prescribed against you. The Pens have been lifted and the Pages have dried. (It was related by at-Tirmidhee, who said it was a Good and Sound Hadeeth)*

Focusing on the beginning of this narration, we see that they were riding together on the same mount. Imagine that - the one who is in charge of the entire Muslim nation, entrusted with the Revelation of Allah, is literally *hanging out* with this lad, dealing him with a great deal of respect! Is there any doubt that this young man will grow up implementing the lessons of this advice 110%? In fact, the example of our Prophet (SAW) while advising is a personification of the Qur'anic injunction on how to advise your own child:

*And (remember) when Luqmân said to his son when he was advising him: "O my son! Join not in worship others with Allâh. Verily! Joining others in worship with Allâh is a great Zâl'm (wrong) indeed. .... "O my son! If it be (anything) equal to the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and though it be in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth, Allâh will bring it forth. Verily, Allâh is Subtle (in bringing out that grain), Well Aware (of its place). O my son! AqimisSalât (perform as Salât), enjoin (people) for AlMa'rûf (Islamic Monotheism and all that is good), and forbid (people) from AlMunkar (i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allâh, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad), and bear with patience whatever befalls you. Verily! These are some of the important commandments ordered by Allâh with no exemption. And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allâh likes not each arrogant boaster. And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the donkey." (Surah Luqman)*

4. With advising the youth also comes teaching. We find the Prophet (SAW) in many narrations using positive reinforcements, rewards, and simply giving importance to the youth to teach them lessons.

*Jaabir bin Samurah – a young child – narrated that he prayed Dhuhr with the Prophet (SAW) in the masjid. He said that the Rasool (SAW) went to his house and he went with him. As the Prophet (SAW) was walking, he would wipe his hands on the cheeks of the kids passing by. Jaabir said that he never smelled a fragrance that was more beautiful than the fragrance of the hand of the Prophet (SAW).*

From the point of view of Jaabir, we see that his memory of Dhuhr at the masjid is one of walking *with* the Messenger of Allah (SAW). For the rest of his life, he will always have this fond memory, he can always remember this fragrance in his mind, and he has a *positive reinforcement* associated with going to the Salah. It's time we compare this to the way children are treated at our local Masaajid.

It's also time we compare our own way of dealing, interacting, advising and even engaging ourselves with our children with what our Prophet (SAW) did. What positive reinforcements are we working on for our youth?

[Abridged from an article published as a blog post in [www.muslimmatters.org](http://www.muslimmatters.org)]

## Approaching the Sunnah – Comprehension and Controversy

*Yusuf al-Qaradawi*

### Principles of the application of the Sunnah

The Sunnah of the Prophet comes as a source following along with the Quran and making it clear, as Allah said, addressing to His Messenger, "We have sent down to you the Remembrance so that you make clear to humankind what has been sent down for them" (*al-Nahl*, 16:44). Whoever desires to know the practical way of Islam, in its particulars and its pillars, should therefore know it as elaborated and embodied in the Prophet's Sunnah. The term *Sunnah* means 'way' or 'method' or 'pattern'. It represents the Wisdom of the Prophet, in explaining the Quran, in commenting on the truths of Islam, and in his teachings of the Community.

It is a balanced method – between spirit and body, mind and heart, the ideal and actual. When Prophet caught sight of any among his Companions inclining towards either extreme, he turned them back firmly to moderation, and cautioned them against the consequences of excess or insufficiency: "... Whoever prefers [something else] above my *Sunnah* is not one of mine" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). In other words: give to every owner of a right his right. The Sunnah is also a realistic method and deals us as human beings, not angels.

So what are the duties of a Muslim to the Sunnah? We should take the Prophet as the good example to follow in the *entirety* of our lives, as Allah mentioned, "Assuredly there is in the Messenger a good example for one who anticipates with hope God and the Last Day and remembers God much" (Al-Ahzab, 33:21); also in 59:7, 3:31.

The Prophet warned us against three evils: the Message would be targeted by extremists, by falsifiers and by the ignorant (cited from Ibn al-Qayyim in *Miftah Dar al-Sadah*). Ibn 'Abbas narrated from the Prophet, "Beware yourselves against extremism in the religion, for certainly those before you were destroyed by extremism in religion" (Ahmad Ibn-Hanbal). We have to take care from the distorted reports from the falsifiers. Alhamdulillah, scholars tried their best in the past to accept a hadith with a *sanad* (chain of narrators, pl. *isnad*) and scrutinizing its narrators one by one profoundly. There are some great books on false and fabricated ahadith and it is an obligation to make use of their books. Finally, wrong interpretation and rotten understanding are a preoccupation of those who are ignorant of this religion, who never imbibed its spirit, and never pierced with insight of its realities. Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned in his book *al-Ruh*: "Wrong understanding about God and His Messenger is the root of every heretical innovation and error growing up within Islam". Bad interpretation of the texts – whether a text of the Qur'an or of the Sunnah – is a long-standing evil. So, we all must take due care about these three evils and apply the Sunnah thereafter in our life.

Therefore, it is crucial to verify the proof of the Sunnah and its soundness according to the comparison, scientific methods and painstaking details, which the learned scholars applied to such proofs.

Another principle is to achieve the proficiency in understanding the Sunnah. 'Understanding' means understanding in harmony with the meanings indicated by the language, in the lights of the path or general intent of the hadith, the space-time issue related to the Sunnah.

The third principle is that one assures oneself of the safety of the text from contradiction by what is stronger than it. By 'what is stronger' may be a text from the Qur'an, or other ahadith

more abundant in number of sources, or more sound in proof of their authenticity, or more consonant with original principles (*usul*), or more fitted to the purpose of the Legislative measures. We need to consider *al-ta'arrud wa al-tarjih* (contradiction and preference on balance of evidence) of *usul al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) and *usul al-hadith*.

### **The Sunnah as a source for jurisprudence and preaching**

We must note that all jurists of all times refer to the Sunnah. We can state with complete assurance that all the jurists of the Muslims – from different schools of thoughts, from diverse cities, whose doctrines survives or has been cut off, is followed or is not flowed – have been in agreement on acceptance of the Sunnah and the appeal to it in making rulings (as the second source of principles of Islamic jurisprudence after Qur'an). So those few groups of atheists or others, who blindly say to discard Sunnah in its entirety, should be totally rejected.

Since Sunnah is a fundamental source of fiqh, it is one of the duties of jurists to go deeply into the science of hadith. It is strange that there are many weak ahadith in the books of fiqh. Now many accept the use of a weak hadith to teach the merits of certain deeds (*fada'il*), or to inspire longing for God (*targhib*) and dread of Him (*tarhib*). But there is a general agreement that a weak hadith cannot be used to derive injunctions, that one cannot build upon it the obligations of the lawful (*halal*) and the unlawful (*haram*). So it is a duty of the learned community in our time to go back over the fiqh inheritance – in the light of knowledge of the hadith combined with fiqh and its principles, with penetrating and perceptive reasoning – and look into the injunctions based on weak ahadith.

In some cases, in preaching and guidance through sermons and religious counselors, we use weak ahadith too. Every preacher is under obligation not to rely on ahadith that are feeble or rejected or classes as fabricated. Before presenting a hadith as evidence, a preacher should seek out the importance of the hadith he is going to present as evidence, he should find out its meaning, its value, its stance; and indeed the obligations is to rely on authenticated sources. We should keep in mind that some are deceived by a hadith's being widely known from books to tongues of many people but weak or fake hadith. Many preachers in Friday sermons or lessons of admonishment use a bundle of weak or severely weak ahadith.

The most serious case is altering the weight of deeds: giving to some of the righteous deeds a value much greater than their due, or more frequency than is proper to them, by inflating what is in them of reward, until it extinguishes what is more important and higher in rank un the view of religion; conversely, giving undue weight to some of the prescribed acts, overstating what is in them of punishment, in such a way as damages one's perception of the importance of other proscribed acts. This is dangerous. A wise preacher does not transmit what is unclear to people.

For these issues, already there are a good number of books available and one need to study with integrity.

[Abridged from the Chapters 1 and 2, "Approaching the Sunnah – Comprehension and Controversy" (*Kayfa Nata'amal mata al-Sunnah*), by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, published by International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), VA, USA]

## The Seven Phases of Prophet Muhammad's Life

*Javeed Akhter*

Traditional scholars divide Prophet Muhammad's life into Makkan and Madinahn phases. This is chronologically valid and historically important.

Additionally I believe Muhammad's (SAW) struggle can be naturally divided into seven phases. Each phase brings forth a different aspect of his personality and highlights a different facet of his mission. Studying the Messenger's mission for its various phases and analyzing its internal dynamics is important as it gives the narrative relevance for today.

### **The Search for Light in a Period of Darkness: The Seeker of Truth**

As his biography (Seerah) is recorded we find Prophet Muhammad (SAW) pondering over societal ills for years. The society he was born in was in a state of moral, religious, economic and social chaos. It is difficult to resist drawing similarities between the seventh century world and today's world at the beginning of the new millennium. Today's society has become submerged in violence, abuse, exploitation, racism, alcoholism, economic disparities and injustice, etc. The absence of morality in today's society must weigh heavily on the minds of individuals with insight. They can draw personal inspiration from the Prophet's life. The Arab tribal society of the Seventh century, whose structure was based on greed, debauchery, and violence, was changed in a very short time, by the Prophet, into a society with one of the highest moral, economical and even political standards in history.

### **The Warner and Exhorter**

During one of his meditative trips to a cave near Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) receives the divine revelation. This reaffirms that celestial knowledge is essential in guiding the limited human intellect. The depth of this realization that he is the recipient of this divine revelation and the enormity of the task ahead overawes him. It is both fascinating and revealing that even the individual who would later be rated as the most influential man in human history had these initial periods of uncertainty about his mission. It was the reassurance from the Quran and the confidence and support of his wife Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), and his close companions who provided him the support he needs-surely a lesson for us lesser mortals!

### **The Stoic Optimist**

The next facet of his life is of bringing about proactive change by inviting people (Da'wah) to Islam. Change is always threatening, and the greater the change, the more threatening it is, the more hostility it is to face. This would be true of the change against any established system of practices, whether it be economic, social or behavioral. It would also be true for change in personal behavior and specially, in the attitude of people. Not surprisingly the struggle for change becomes life threatening. Muhammad (SAW) had to lay his life on the line and on several occasions the nascent Muslim community faced the possibility of total extinction. Fortitude in the face of adversity is the salient feature of this phase. The patience and stoicism Muhammad (SAW) displays during this phase has been a source of strength to many a Muslim who has found himself stressed by apparently hopeless circumstances.

### **The Pluralistic Leader**

The Migration, which marks the beginning of the next phase, involves careful planning and thorough execution. He demonstrates that self-help and reliance on Allah go together and are both essential for success. With his nomination to leadership by the community in Madinah, he shows another facet of his personality: the capacity to create a truly pluralistic society with equity and dignity for all religious and ethnic groups. In a very short period after the Migration to Madinah, Muhammad (SAW) proves he is capable of uniting various factions and setting exemplary standards of cooperation between them. From a person under constant persecution, he becomes a successful leader with a large administrative and judicial responsibility. The "Covenant (Constitution) of Madinah" provides a good model to be followed, even in today's inescapably multi-religious and multi-cultural world.

### **The Courageous Yet Reluctant Warrior**

After a brief respite, his mission is consumed by the need to fight wars of survival. These three wars in four years, Badr, Uhud and Ahzab, besides posing a physical threat, must have been extremely distracting and demanding of his time and energy. Yet the work of building the community goes on.

It is important to remember that even though faced with very aggressive proponents the Prophet and his followers never initiated or instigated any wars. They engaged in these battles with great discipline, avoiding injury to the innocent and using only the minimum force needed. Women, children and non-combatants were not to be harmed. When the enemy stopped fighting, he was to be given immediate sanctuary. Striking a blow in anger, even in battle, was prohibited. He uses innovative strategies in the battles, which include the use of the trench as a defense. During the digging of the trench he is an active participant. He consults frequently (Shura) with his companions and follows the majority opinion (Ijma'), even when it sometimes goes against his own judgment.

### **The Statesman Par Excellence and Teacher**

During the next phase, he shows the capacity to compromise. He demonstrates the foresight and wisdom to realize that peace, even at seemingly unfavorable terms, is better than hostility. The "Treaty of Hudaybia" is a good model for those who negotiate with their opponents. The peace dividend, following this treaty with the Quraysh, is huge and results in an exponential increase in the number of Muslims.

This also allows the building of a model and just society that functions in a logical manner. It is an egalitarian society with equity and justice for all, governed by mutual consultation, equality before the law and protection of its most vulnerable members, women, children, orphans, indigents and slaves.

As illustrated by many incidents from this phase of his life, the Prophet proves to be an exemplary statesman. He mediates disputes efficiently, keeps pledges whenever he gives and takes risks with courage, without compromising for the sake of peace. His agents to other nations bring with them a message of cooperation, proving his efficiency in diplomacy.

### **The Compassionate Ruler and Spiritual Leader**

The final phase begins with the conquest of Makkah - a demonstration of careful planning and the use of overwhelming force to achieve a victory with practically no loss of life on either side of the battle front. He is humble in victory, compassionate, and forgiving to even his most intractable opponents, in a way that is unmatchable in history.

The final sermon consolidates the social, economic, and moral changes that have been brought about in the society.

It is time to prepare for the end. The anatomy of the mission, its growth and evolution in some ways parallels the various stages of human life itself. These phases reflect not only the growing complexity of the message but also the increasing maturity of the recipients of the message.

The Prophet's fundamental mission was to interpret and spread the Quranic ideology. The Quran says about him "*Indeed there is for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern*" (Quran 33:21). His wife Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) calls him the living embodiment of the Quran. It is this complementary inheritance of the Quran and Sunnah that is our special blessing.

It's true that over time, many differences and sects have emerged amongst the followers of Islam. Still, the core messages of Quran, and its realization in the life of the Prophet (SAW) are alive and potent, and continue to provide spiritual solace, intellectual satisfaction and societal discipline to many, making Islam the fastest growing religion in the world.

[**Javeed Akhter** is the Executive Director of the Chicago based International Strategy and Policy Institute and he is the author of the book "The seven phases of Prophet Muhammad's Life"]

[Simplified version of an article taken from [www.IslamiCity.com](http://www.IslamiCity.com)]

## Call for Article

We request you to send your writings for the coming issues of this magazine. The next issue (July – September, 2008) will focus on *Parenting Islamic Perspectives*. So please inform others and send your write-up, summary of book chapters, book review, important information, poem, comments, biography, etc.

**Last date for Submission:** 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

**Submit to:** wp.magazine@yahoo.com

## The Prophet's Approach To Environmentalism

*Saffet Sancaklı*

One of the most threatening problems of the present day doubtlessly concerns the environment. The world up to this day has never experienced an environmental problem at such a comprehensive level. At its center resides the human element that owns the potential to protect it. It is a religious and national duty to try to leave a better environment for the next generations. In this context, Islam has prioritized and preached the protection of the environment.

Through the course of his life, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has also been concerned with the environment and its protection, and he has left behind, if you will, "Ecological Sunnah<sup>1</sup>." This phrase refers to the love the Prophet had for the living beings and nature, his verbal teachings concerning their protection as well as his acts in line with this motivation. The *hadith* sources examined in this context reveal many direct and indirect *ahadith* related to the field.

These *ahadith* contain many warnings against the pollution of rivers and seas. There are distinctive provisions admonishing urination in waterlines, under fruit trees, on roads and in places that people rested and keeping animals at a distance from the wells. It is even stated that these acts are actually forbidden in Islam. The *ahadith* point to the need to keep the Masjids clean, not to urinate by the water sources, river sides and stagnant water;

*"Any of you shall not urinate in dead water because they may do ablution with that water later."*  
(Bukhara, "Vudu" B.68; Muslim, "Taharat" H.No: 95-96)

The Prophet had been closely involved with the environment and nature ever since he was a child. He explains that he used to be a shepherd like other prophets:

*"When the Prophet said, 'Allah did not send a prophet who did not herd cattle,' the Companions said: "The Messenger of Allah, have you also herded cattle?" He replied: "Yes, indeed I have herded sheep of Meccans for a little money."* ((Bukhara, "Ijara" B.2; Ibn Maja, "Tijārāt" B.5)

Moreover, the Prophet owned many animals (horse, sheep, goat, etc.), orchards and gardens in later parts of his life. Therefore, the Prophet displayed some exemplary behavior in the greening and afforesting of the environment.

One of his greatest efforts in this context was to afforest an area called "Zuraybu't Taweel," where he announced:

*"Whoever cuts a tree here should plant a new tree instead."*

Together with this regulation the area shortly turned into a forest. The Prophet also declared an area of 12 mile distance from the center of Medina as *haram* and also prohibited the cutting of trees and the killing of animals within its borders.

The existence of many *ahadith* that encourage the greening and afforesting of the environment clearly reflects the Prophet's concern thereof.

*"If a Muslim plants a tree or grow grains and a bird, a person or an animal eats from it will be counted as a charity for him."* (Bukhara, "al-Khars ve'l-Muzara", Muslim, "Musakaat", H. No: 12)

*"If any of you have a date sapling on the doomsday he should plant it -if possible."* (Bukhara, Edebu'l-mufred, (thk., Halid Abdurrahman), p. 138, Daru'l-Ma'rife, Beirut, 1966).

The aim here is to make people understand the importance of planting trees.

*"Whoever plants a tree is rewarded by Allah as much as the produce grown in that tree."* (Ahmad b.Hanbal, Musnad, V, 415.)

*"Whoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded,"* (Ahmad b.Hanbal, Musnad, IV, 61, 374)

*"Whoever plants a tree and it matures, Allah plants a tree in paradise for that person."* (Ahmad b.Hanbal, Musnad, IV, 61).

The Prophet also emphasized the role of love in treating the environment with care and affection. He has expressed his love for Mountain Uhud as:

*"This is a mount which likes us; we also love it."* (Bukhara, "Meghazi", B. 27).

Without making any differentiation, Islam has preached the equal responsibility of human beings to all living creatures. Just as important as the human rights, it is crucial to observe the rights of animals. One has the obligation to show compassion and mercy to other living beings.

*"Allah the Merciful mercy the merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth so that those in the heavens mercy you."* (Tirmizi, "Birr": B.16).

*"...Those who are not merciful will not be get mercy..."* (Bukhari, "Book of Adab" B. 18; Muslim, "Fedail" H.No: 65).

These two *ahadith* show that we should be merciful not only to humans but also to other living creatures. The Prophet has prohibited practices against animals such as hitting them, practicing shooting by targeting them, inciting them to fight, hunting for fun, and using a slingshot to hunt them. It is mentioned in *ahadith* that the humans will be accounted for their bad treatment of animals.

By saying, *"Allah will ask those who kill a sparrow unfairly on the Day of Judgment."* (Muslim, "Sayd" H.No:57) the Prophet asked people not to torture animals. He forbade cauterizing and cursing animals, ruining bird nests, and removing chicks from their nest. He also wanted people to keep domestic animals and their sheds clean and to treat their cubs with compassion. Considering even a cat as a family member, he stated that every good deed concerning an animal would be rewarded.

Treating animals in a humane manner and abandoning traditions that harm them is an irrefutable precondition of being civilized. As the greatest environmentalist, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had affirmative practices in relation to the environment throughout his life. At the root of the *ahadith*, which are related to the environment, lie sensitivity for nature and a consciousness to protect it.

Source: [www.lastprophet.info](http://www.lastprophet.info)

## The Sunnah (from 'Usul al-Fiqh')

*Shah Abdul Hannan*

Literal meaning of Sunnah in Arabic is beaten track or established course of conduct. Pre-Islamic Arabs used the word for ancient or continuous practice. According to Ulama of Hadith, Sunnah refers to all that is narrated from the Prophet (SM), his acts, his sayings and whatever he tacitly approved. The Jurisprudents exclude the features of the Prophet (SM) from Sunnah. In the Hadith literature, there are uses of the word Sunnah in the sense of sources of law, for instance, in the Prophet's farewell Hajj address and at the time of sending Muadh (R.A.) to Yemen.

The term Sunnah was introduced in the legal theory towards the end of the first century. It may be noted that in the late 2nd Century Hijra, Imam Shafii restricted the term to the Prophetic Sunnah only. In the Usul al Fiqh, Sunnah means the source of Shariah next to the Quran. But to the Ulama of Fiqh, Sunnah primarily refers to a Shariah value which is not obligatory but falls in the category of Mandub or recommended. But as a source, Sunnah can create obligation (wajib), Haram, Makruh, etc. In the technical usage Sunnah and Hadith have become synonymous to mean conduct of the Prophet (SM). The Sunnah of the Prophet (SM) is a proof (Hujjah). The Quran testifies that Sunnah is divinely inspired (53:3). The Quran enjoins obedience to the Prophet (SM) (59:7; 4:59; 4:80; 33:36). Allah asked the believers to accept the Prophet as judge (4:65).

One classification of Sunnah is Qawli, Faili and Taqriri (verbal, actions and tacit approval).

### Legal and non-legal Sunnah

A very important classification is legal and non-legal Sunnah. Legal Sunnah (*Sunnah tashriyyah*) consists of the Prophetic activities and instructions of the Prophet (SM) as the Head of the State and as Judge. Non-legal Sunnah (*Sunnah Ghayr tashriyyah*) mainly consist of the natural activities of the Prophet (Al-afal-al-jibilliyyah), such as the manner in which he ate, slept, dressed and such other activities, which do not form a part of Shariah. This is called *adat* (habit) of the Prophet in the 'Nurul Anwar', a text book of Usul. Certain activities may fall in between the two. Only competent scholars can distinguish the two in such areas. Sunnah which partakes of technical knowledge such as, medicine, agriculture is not part of Shariah according to most scholars. As for the acts and sayings of the Prophet that related to particular circumstances such as, the strategy of war, including such devices that misled the enemy forces, timing of attack, siege or withdrawal, these too are considered to be situational and not a part of the Shariah.

Certain matters are particular to the Prophet (SM) such as, the case of number of wives, marriage without dower, prohibition of remarriage of the widows of the prophet (SM). The Quran has priority over Sunnah, because of nature of revelation (*wahy zahir* over *wahy Batin*), authenticity and also because Sunnah is basically and mostly an elaboration of the Quran. In case of real conflict, the Quran should prevail. Never the Quran was abandoned in favor of the Sunnah.

It may be noted that Sunnah in many instances confirms the Quran. Please look into examples given in the book. There is no disagreement on this. Sunnah also explains and clarifies the Quran as in the case of Salat, Zakat, Hajj, Riba and many other matters of transactions.

Another part of Sunnah which is called *Sunnah al-Muassisah* or founding Sunnah (such as, prohibition of marrying paternal or maternal aunt, or the right of pre-emption in property (*shuf*')) cannot be traced in the Quran and originated in the Sunnah.

Implication of verse 16:44 (Surah Nahl) does not clearly over-rule the recognition of Sunnah as an independent source, at least in some respects. It may be noted from other books (not discussed in Hashim Kamali's book) that the experts in Hadith literature at the stage of collection of Hadith examined all Hadith before recording in their collections (particularly the claim of transmission from the Prophet (SM) downward) and classified Hadith into strong (*sahih/hasan*), weak (*daif*) and forged (*Mawdu*). It is now re-examination of Hadith literature is continuing. In current century, Nasiruddin Albani had good work on this subject. Anybody who knows Arabic well, can look into Albani's works (see also 'Studies in Hadith Methodology', by M.M. Azami, published by American Trust Publications).

***Mutawatir Hadith*** has been considered Qati (definitive) in concept (*Mutawatir bil Ma'na*) mostly. There are only a few Hadith which are *Mutawatir bil Lafz* (Mutawatir word by word). Also note that because of large number of reporters of Mutawatir Hadith, diversity of residence of the reporters, it is impossible to concoct a lie in this manner. The main conditions of Mutawatir Hadith are:

- a. large number of reporters,
- b. reports must be based on direct knowledge and through sense perception,
- c. reporters must be upright,
- d. reporters are free from sectarian or political bias of that time.

According to the majority of Ulama of Usul, the authority of Mutawatir is equivalent to the Quran. It gives positive knowledge, the denial of Mutawatir Hadith or Sunnah is equivalent to denial of the Quran.

***Mashhur Hadith*** is a kind of Hadith, which is reported by one or two companions, then become well known. The majority of Ulama considered Mashhur as a kind of *Ahad Hadith* and it gives speculative knowledge, not positive knowledge. *Ahad Hadith* (in most cases reported by a single companion and which did not become well-known in the 2 or 3 generations) does not give positive knowledge. Majority of Jurists hold that if *Ahad* is reported by reliable reporters, it establishes a rule of law. Some hold acting upon *Ahad* is only preferable. Aqidah (beliefs) or Hadud (prescribed punishment) should not be based on *Ahad Hadith*.

If a Hadith is narrated by a number of narrators and there are additional words in some of them, then it should be looked into whether the Hadith was originally uttered in one sitting. In that case, the words narrated by more narrators will be accepted. Imam Malik did not rely on *Ahad Hadith*, if it was in conflict with the practice of Madinah. Most Imams considered *Ahad Hadith* to be authoritative in principle if reported by reliable reporters. Majority of Ulama do not insist on verbatim transmission (*rewat bil Lafz*) of *Ahad*. Transmission of a part of Hadith is permitted, if it is not in conflict with the full Hadith.

### **Muttasil (connected) & Ghair al-Muttasil (disconnected) Hadith**

What is the difference between Muttasil (connected) and Ghair al-Muttasil (disconnected) Hadith? Mutawatir, Mushhur and Ahad are kinds of Muttasil hadith. Mursal, Mudal and Munqati are various types of Ghair al-Muttasil Hadith.

According to majority, *Mursal* means that a successor (Tabii), narrates a Hadith without mentioning the name of companions. Majority of Ulama of Hadith do not accept the *Mursal* as evidence. Imam Ahmad and Imam Shafii do not rely on *Mursal* unless reported by famous successor, even then *Mursal* have to meet certain conditions as mentioned in books on Usul. Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik are less stringent in their acceptance of *Mursal*. *Munqati* refers to a Hadith whose chain of narrators single missing link somewhere of the middle of the chain.

*Mudal* is a Hadith in which two consecutive links are missing.

### Sahih, Hasan & Daif

The Hadith has also been classified into Sahih, Hasan and Daif. Hadith is called *Sahih* (that is excellent in terms of quality of narrators - not in the sense of Qati or absolutely correct), if it is reported by Thiqat Sabitun (highly trustworthy) or by Thiqat (trustworthy) narrator. A Hadith is considered *Hasan* if among the narrators are included (apart from the categories of narrators of Sahih Hadith) some persons who are Sadiq (truthful), Sadiq Yahim (truthful but commits error) and Maqbul (accepted that is there is no proof that he is unreliable).

A Hadith is considered *Daif* if among the reporters are any Majhul person (that is unknown person in terms of identity or conduct) or if there is any Fasiq (violator of any important practice) or any liar.

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### Some important books on Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his Sunnah

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| An Introduction to the Science of Hadith  | by <i>Suhail Hassan</i>                |
| <a href="http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/hadeeth/sh_ish/index.htm">http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/hadeeth/sh_ish/index.htm</a> |  |
| The Sunnah: A Source of Civilization  | by <i>Yusuf Al-Qaradawi</i>            |
| <a href="http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/Q_SSC/default.htm">http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/Q_SSC/default.htm</a>   |  |
| The Life of Muhammad  | by <i>Muhammad Husayn Haykal</i>       |
| <a href="http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/MH_LM/default.htm">http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/MH_LM/default.htm</a>   |  |
| Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum (The Sealed Nectar)  | by <i>Saifur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri</i> |
| <a href="http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/SM_tsn/index.htm">http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/SM_tsn/index.htm</a>     |  |
| Finality of Prophethood   | by <i>Syed Abul Ala Maududi</i>        |
| <a href="http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/M_fop/index.htm">http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/M_fop/index.htm</a>       |  |
| Approaching the Sunnah – Comprehension and Controversy  | by <i>Yusuf Al-Qaradawi</i>            |
| Muhammad: Man and Prophet   | by <i>Adil M Salahi</i>                |
| Muhammad: His Life based on the Earliest Sources  | by <i>Martin Lings</i>                 |

## Indispensability of Hadith

*Khalid Alvi*

The Place of Hadith in Islam, MSA, American Trust Publications

Sunnah or Hadith is the second source from which the teachings of Islam are drawn. Hadith literally means a saying conveyed to man, but in Muhaditheen's terminology Hadith means sayings of the Prophet, his action or practice of his silent approval of the action or practice. Hadith and Sunnah are used interchangeably, but sometimes these are used for different meanings.

To deal with the topic it is necessary to know the position of the Prophet in Islam, because the indispensability of Hadith depends upon the position of the Prophet.

Analyzing the problem we can visualize three possibilities:

1. The duty of the Prophet was only to convey the message and nothing more was required from him.
2. He had not only to convey the message but also to act upon it and to explain it. But all that was for the specified period and after his death Qur'an is sufficient to guide humanity.
3. No doubt he had to convey the Divine Message but it was also his duty to act upon it and to explain it to the people. His actions and explanations are a source of guidance forever. His sayings, actions, practices and explanations are a source of light for every Muslim in every age.

The learned men of the Muslim Millat are of the unanimous view that only the third point is the correct assessment of the Prophet's position in Islam. The Qur'an contains dozens of reminders of the important position of the Prophet. For instance the Qur'an says:

*"And verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the last day and remembereth Allah much." (Al-Ahzab, 33:31)*

According to this verse, every Muslim is bound to have the good example of the Prophet as an ideal in life. In another verse he has been made a 'Hakam' for the Muslims by Allah Almighty. No one remains Muslim if he does not accept the Prophet's decisions and judgements:

*"But no, by thy Lord, they can have no real faith until they make thee judge in all disputes between them and find in their souls no resistance against thy decisions but accept them with the fullest conviction." (An-Nisa, 4:65)*

While explaining the qualities of Muslims the Qur'an says:

*"The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His apostle, in order that He may judge between them, is no other than this: They say: we hear and we obey." (An-Nur, 24:51)*

In many places the Qur'an has given its verdict on this issue. The Qur'an says:

*"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger." (An-Nisa, 4:59)*

and,

*"Whatever the Messenger giveth you take it and whatever he forbiddeth abstain from it." (Al-Hashr, 59:7)*

Qur'an is very clear in expressing its view on the position of the Prophet. According to the Qur'an the Prophet has four capacities and he must be obeyed in every capacity. He is Mu'allim wa Murabbee he is Shaari` one who explains the Book, he is a law-giver and judge, and he is a ruler. In all these capacities he is an ideal example for the Muslims. I am quoting a few verses of the Holy Book just to give a hint of this topic.

*"Allah did confer a great favor on the believers when He sent among them an apostle from among themselves rehearsing unto them the signs of Allah, sanctifying them in scripture and wisdom while, before that, they had been in manifest error." (Al-Imran, 3:164)*

*"And We have sent down unto thee the Message that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them." (An-Nahl, 16:44)*

*"For he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good and pure and prohibits them from what is bad and impure. He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them." (Al-Araf, 7:157)*

*"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the apostle, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything amongst yourselves refer it to Allah and His Apostle, if you believe in Allah and the last day." (An-Nisa, 4:59)*

*"It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman when a matter has been decided by Allah and His apostle to have any option about their decision. If any one disobeys Allah and His apostle, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path." (Al-Ahzab, 33:36)*

In all these verses, the Qur'an has explained various aspects of the Prophets personality. One can judge the importance of the Prophet from these verses. I am reminded of another important verse of the Qur'an, which is actually a verdict against those who do not believe in Hadith as an authentic source of law:

*"If any one contends with the Prophet even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen and land him in Hell, what an evil refuge." (An-Nisa, 4:110)*

The Qur'an while pressing the Muslims to obey the Prophet, goes a step further when it announces that the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is above all the limitations of time and space. He is the last Prophet and is a Messenger of Allah for the whole of humanity for all time to come.

Hadith is nothing but a reflection of the personality of the Prophet, who is to be obeyed at every cost.

Any student of the Qur'an will see that the Holy Book generally deals with the broad principles or essentials of religion, going into details in very rare cases. The details were generously supplied by the Prophet himself, either by showing in his practice how an injunction shall be carried out, or by giving an explanation in words. The Sunnah or Hadith of the Holy Prophet was not, as is generally supposed, a thing of which the need may have been felt only after his death, for it was very much needed in his lifetime. The two most important religious institutions of Islam are prayer and zakat; yet when the injunction relating to prayer and zakat were delivered, and they were repeatedly revealed in both Mecca and Madina, no details were supplied. Keep up prayers (aqimoo as-salaah the Qur'anic injunction and it was the Prophet himself who by his own actions gave details of the prayer and said: (Salloo kamaa ra'aytamoonee usaallee) "Pray as you see me praying."

Payment of zakah is again an injunction frequently repeated in the Qur'an yet it was the Prophet (peace be upon him) who gave the rules and regulations for its payment and collection. These are but two examples; but since Islam covers the entire sphere of human activities, hundreds of points had to be explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) by his example in action and in words.

The Ulama have discussed the question of Hadith in detail as a "wahyun khafee" and prophetic wisdom. I do not want to go into the details, but one thing must be stated clearly that there were cases when the Prophet, not having received a revelation, made a personal effort to formulate opinion through his own wisdom. Either it was corrected by revelation or it was approved. The importance of the Sunnah even as a second source of Islam was a settled issue for the Companions of the Prophet. I quote only one of the many examples: that of Mu`az ibn Jabal who said to the Prophet that he would decide according to the Sunnah if he did not find the solution of a problem in the Book. To quote Dr. Hamidullah:

"The importance of Hadith is increased for the Muslim by the fact that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not only taught, but took the opportunity of putting his teachings into practice in all the important affairs of life. He lived for twenty three years after his appointment as the Messenger of Allah. He endowed his community with a religion, which he scrupulously practiced himself. He founded a state, which he administered as the supreme head, maintaining internal peace and order, heading armies for external defense, judging and deciding the litigations of his subjects, punishing the criminals and legislating in all walks of life. He married and left a model of family life. Another important fact is that he did not declare himself to be above the ordinary law which he imposed on others. His practice was not mere private conduct, but a detailed interpretation and application of his teachings." (Introduction to Islam page 23)

The man, therefore, who embraced Islam stood in need of both the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Actually Hadith is so important that without it one cannot fully understand the Holy Book and Islam or be able to apply it to one's life and practice.

Source: <http://www.islaam.com>

## Political rationale of Prophet's external relations (Releasing the prisoners of Badr, forgiveness of Meccans after victory at Mecca)

**AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman**

To understand the political rationale of the Prophet's external policies, we have to examine four basic issues, frequently referred to but misread by traditionalists, which clearly point out the superior political, rather than the purely legalistic, rationale of the Prophet in his conduct of foreign affairs. These are:

1. The prisoners of war captured during the battle of Badr.
2. Lenient policies toward the Quraysh, the archenemies of the early Muslims.
3. The continued respect and tolerance shown to the People of the Book.

In this lecture, we will cover the issues from the book *Towards an Islamic Theory of International Relations: New Directions for Methodology and Thought* by AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition reprint, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, Virginia, USA, 1993, pp. p.99-115.

### **1. Prisoners of War from the Battle of Badr**

The battle of Badr took place between the Muslims and the tribe of Quraysh in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Hijra. Only two out of about seventy prisoners of war were executed; the remainder were set free upon their paying various amounts of ransom. The battle of Badr was the first major armed confrontation between the Muslims and the Quraysh and other Arab and Jewish tribes of Arabia. This battle came after twelve years of pressure and severe persecution against the Muslims, many of whom were forced to flee, first to Abyssinia and then to Madinah.

While the Quraysh tried to persuade the people of Madinah to expel the Prophet and his Quraysh followers, the Prophet began to establish and consolidate the Muslim force for the inevitable confrontation. He made an honorable peace arrangement (the Madinah Pact) between the Muslims and the Jewish tribes of Madinah, established a brotherhood between the *muhajirun* and the *Ansar*, and personally sent expeditions to the areas Madinah to seek support and establish peace. Ibn Jahsh's expedition of surveillance ended with the first attack by Muslims against a Quraysh caravan. The importance of this expedition is that it led to the march of the Quraysh army toward Madinah and then to the battle of Badr. The following Quranic verses were revealed in relation of this occasion:

*"It is not for any Prophet to have prisoners until he has thoroughly subdued the land"*  
(Al-Anfal, 8:67)

Legalism leads Muslim writers to apologize for this verse by arguing the contrast with another verse which reads as follows:

*"Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers [in battle], smite at their necks; at length, when you have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly on them; thereafter [is the time for] either generosity or ransom until the burden of war may be lifted."* (Muhammad, 47:4)

The argument of these writers is that the first verse is “not a permanent legislation” or ruling. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse that is the permanent and establish rule for deciding the fate of prisoners of war. The first is only to blame Muslims for having taken prisoners and point out that the “real” will of God is not to take prisoners of war.

This is the modern way of apply the antiquated and static technique of abrogation. Contemporary writers often take a liberal approach by considering the release of prisoners of war as a safe and sound policy, and dismissing the verse of blame (for not killing all the prisoners of war captured at Badr) as something temporary and pertaining only to the period of establishment of the early Muslim state. The other way in which modern writers look at the issue is by rationalizing it into a legal case against war criminals rather than mere prisoners of war.

These writers seem to overlook the significance of the circumstances in directing punitive measures against adversaries of the Muslims. It is clear that the first verse was revealed at a time of extreme pressure on Muslims whereas a close examination of the second verse shows that Muslim victory was foreseen.

In order that we may understand the meaning and significance of actions, policies, and pronouncement related to the early period of Madinah and the circumstances that lead to Badr and resulted from it, we must take a closer look at those part of *Surah al-Anfal* which were revealed in relation to the battle of Badr.

Interestingly enough, some verses advising the Prophet to take extreme measures in order to protect the Muslim community were inserted (on the Prophet’s orders) in *Surat al-Anfal* instead of *Surat al-Ahzab*. The latter, it should be realized, refers explicitly to the battle of the Ditch and the subsequent battle of the Banu Qurayzah, but in the contest of a Muslim victory. This shows that *Surat al-Anfal* deals with the pressures facing Muslims in early Madinah only, and is meant to guide Muslims when they are faced with similar circumstances.

*Surat al-Anfal* reveals to the reader the fears of the Muslims due to their lack of manpower, their need for the employment of psychological warfare, and the free hand of the Prophet to employ all suitable actions to counter the overwhelmingly superior enemy forces. This Surah also illustrates the Muslim call for co-existence and reconciliation on the condition that the persecution of Muslims and hostility against there religion cease.

The verses concerning the prisoners of war taken at the battle of Badr specifically reveal the employment of a threat of extreme punitive action against the enemy on the battle field as a restraining device of psychological warfare. The psychological use of a threat in this way explains why the threat was actually carried out at Badr. The killing of prisoners of war was an extremely rare exception throughout the life of the Prophet. Thus, it is clear that the verses were to serve political rather than legal ends.

## **2. Quraysh:Honor for the Vanquished**

After Khaybar, the Prophet finally put an end to the hostile Jewish power in Madinah and the surrounding areas by stopping their valuable political and financial aid to the anxious, disabled, and exhausted Quraysh.

With the failure of the Quraysh to live up to the peace agreement between themselves and the Prophet, and after they committed a massacre in Makkah itself when their allies (the Banu Bakr) fell upon the Khuza’ah, the Prophet took the opportunity to carry out a surprise master stroke against Makkah. While his psychological warfare succeeded in causing Makkah and the Quraysh to surrender, he ordered no military reprisals, no destruction, and no punishment,

even after all the bitter memories and the long nightmare of persecution of Muslims at the hands of the Quraysh. On the contrary, the Prophet took all measures to ensure the safety of Makkah and its inhabitants. He did everything in his power to win their hearts and gain their support. He was now master of Arabia and found it possible and fruitful to follow a policy of leniency and far-reaching generosity toward the Quraysh and other tribes, such as the Hawazin of Taif. The decision also had clear political motives for the Muslims were now strong and secure and, moreover, new plans were already taking shape. After Khaybar, the Prophet realized the inevitability of armed conflict with the great powers of Byzantium and Persia when the first bloody conflict had materialized at Mu'tah between the Muslims and Roman troops. With Arabia and the dominant Quraysh tribe on his side, the Prophet was able to turn north toward the stronghold of Byzantium in northern Arabia. These involvements against northern neighbors also had the advantage of maintaining the cohesion and enthusiasm of the Arab tribes. Armed conflict was inevitable, regardless of any academic argument about whether the new Muslim state should expand.

Upon returning to Madinah from the peaceful conquest of Makkah, the Prophet, in response to the hostile Roman attitude and actions toward the Muslims, led the largest Muslim army of his time northward to Tabuk on the borders of Palestine. This was the last time he led his army before his death. Usamah's expedition was the last Muslim expedition ordered out before he died. Although it was ready before the Prophet's death, it moved toward its destination in the north only upon renewed orders from the newly appointed *khalifah*. Later events proved the political wisdom of the prophet in consolidation the Muslims' power in Arabia before getting involved in armed conflict with the two hostile empires bordering on the north.

### **3. Freedom of Religion and Belief**

The freedom of religion and belief is still an important source of confusion and contradiction in contemporary Muslim political thought. Here, too, the traditional approach contributes to the atmosphere of fear and suspicion between Muslim and non-Muslim peoples because it minimizes communication and makes interaction and cooperation more difficult. The traditional position stems from the classical interpretation of the early sources on the issues of apostasy (*riddah*), the historical case of the forced Islamization of pagan Arabs, and the imposition of the poll tax (*jizyah*) on non-Muslims. Once more, these issues reveal the traditional attitude to be an obstacle to introducing a constructive Islamic approach to relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims in the world today, and from within a modern Islamic framework in the field of international relations.

Muslim reformists and modernists such as 'Abduh, Rida 'Azzam, al Sa'idi and many others made strenuous efforts to resolve this problem, but it is still not conceptually clear. Apart from other factors, the issue of freedom of belief in Muslim societies is very much in need of unambiguous articulation. For Muslim societies, the issue is not an internal one alone, for it touches on an important ideological aspect of their relationship with other states and peoples. Clarification is essential if Muslim society is to be a truly open one in which civil rights are guaranteed and made available to all its members in a reciprocal relationship between rights and duties, and along pluralistic lines free from religious and sectarian biases. Loyalty and commitment to the welfare of all people and their different systems of law is the only guarantee for the sincere exercise of rights and duties by individual and groups. Freedom of ideology and religion assisted by peaceful and orderly and orderly means of practice and expression, is necessary for healthy, stable, expanding, and progressive societies.

The classical issue of *jizyah* and the People of the Book are discussed in previous lectures and Chapter 2 of this book. We would like to emphasize here that the overall Islamic framework starts ideologically from a genuine concern for one's fellow man. All Muslims, particularly intellectuals, need to focus on this basic emphasis. The fundamental Islamic attitude concerning relations among human beings is expressed in the Quran and Sunnah in terms of love (*tawadduhum*), help (*tuhsinu*), gentleness (*Allati hiya ahsan*), and protection (*dhimmah*). These attitudes, however, should not be confused with situations of confrontation, particularly that of the historical confrontation faced by the early Muslims in Arabia. It was the prophet himself who drew up the honorable agreement of *jizyah* with the friendly Christian tribes of Najran and before that the Madinah Pact with the Jews tribes of Madinah and it was the prophet who waged a war of life and death against some of the same Jewish tribes who sought the destruction of Muslim community. This confrontations were situational and tactical and do not destroy the basis of Islamic ideology. Quranic reference and the detailed accounts of the Sunnah and the *sirah* are aids in revealing the realistic, rational approach of Islam. These details are matters of historical record that signify the pragmatic Islamic policies undertaken by the Prophet in order to secure the safety and success of the Muslim nations.

The issue of all-out war against the pagan Arab tribes unless they turn to Islam can not be understood as ideological oppression. This decision came after the establishment of the Muslim state at Madinah and after the Muslim had undergone about twenty-two years of persecution and war. It is not acceptable to say, as do the traditionalists, that the Prophet was obligated to force them to accept Islam, because the verses concerning the payment of *jizyah* by the People of the Book had not been revealed at the time of Prophet gave the order to force the Arab Bedouins to convert to Islam. In fact, the Prophet never tried at any time to convert the Jews tribes of Madinah or the Arab Christians of Najran by force. The forced Islamization was a decision, after the experience of about 20 years, to protect the human rights of Muslims and Arab peoples alike. The Islamization of the wild Bedouin tribes of the Arabian Peninsula was to provide them with the framework for a structured social system and orderly inter-tribal interaction. The change proved to be sincere, responsible, correct, and in the best interest of the Arab, specially defending their human rights. Contrary to the cultural legacy of other tribal people such as the Mongolians and Germans, the primitive Arab tribes, winning to their exposure to the discipline and rehabilitating effects of Islam, became the bearer of culture and the builders of civilization. The Arabs, along with other Muslim peoples, establish the greatest human civilization in the human history up to that time and contributed a great deal to the continuity and growth of human culture. Allah says in 4:137, 9:10-11, 49:17, 3:103:

*"Those who believe, then reject faith, and then believe [again] and [again] reject faith and go on increasing in unbelief, Allah will not forgive them, nor guide them on the way"* (Nisa, 4:137)

*"And they observe toward the believers neither pact nor honor. These are the transgressor. And if they respect and establish worship and pay Zakah, then they are your brothers in religion. We detail Our revelations for a people who have knowledge."* (At-Tawbah, 9:10-11)

*"They [the desert Arabs] impress on you as a favor that they have embraced Islam. Say, 'Count not your Islam as a favor to me: Ney, God has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith'."* (Al-Hujurat, 49:17)

*"And holdfast altogether by the rope which Allah [stressed out to you], and be not divided among yourselves: and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became brothers." (Al-Imran, 3:103)*

If forced conversion were simply an exercise to show superiority, or denial of the right of religious freedom, the Prophet had more reason and time to practice this against the Jewish tribes of Madinah; however, he never attempted that policy either before or after issuing his orders regarding the Islamization of the Arab tribes. As we mentioned in chapter 2, the Quranic terminology is revealing in this respect thus we can see that the case of the Islamization of the Bedouin pagan tribes of the peninsula was a case of establishing a necessary civilized framework for human interacting based on human maturity and dignity. Properly understood, it does not destroy but rather reinforced the concept of ideological tolerance and real concern for basic human rights proper for humanity, which is an integral part of the responsibility of the Khalifah. We have already covered the issue of apostasy in another lecture (Lecture-8).

(Abridged from "Towards an Islamic Theory of International Relations: New Directions for Methodology and Thought" by AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition reprint, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, Virginia, USA, 1993, pp. 102-108.)

Source: <http://www.witness-pioneer.org/VSchool/hp101.htm#notes>

### A Concise Book Review:

#### **Muhammad: Man and Prophet by Adil Salahi**

I have read a major biography of the Prophet, "Muhammad: Man and Prophet" (830 pages) written by Adil Salahi and published by Islamic Foundation, U.K. (E-mail no: [i-foundation@islamic-foundation.org.uk](mailto:i-foundation@islamic-foundation.org.uk)). I must say that I have never read such a detailed, authentic and useful biography before. This book has the following characteristics:

- a) Its language is very easy, plain and sweet.
- b) It has used only authentic sources, he has used other reports in some places but always mentioned about their state of authenticity.
- c) Adil Salahi has not only given events of Prophet's life and his actions and moves but also has given the possible reasons and interpretations of each such move and action. He has also given interpretation of all the moves of the Quraysh, the Jewish tribes and the Byzantines.
- d) He has taken a non-sectarian and fair historical approach, which befits a believer.

I think you should try to benefit from this book.

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## Hadith Textual Criticism: A Reconsideration

Mohsen Haredy

Of the four main sources of Islamic Shari`ah, Hadith occupies a place second only to the Qur'an. It is, therefore, not surprising to note that the Hadith debate is not new. Towards the end of the 20th century the study of Hadith has made considerable progress and received increasing attention in both Muslim and Western worlds. This is due to the discovery of new sources and to developments in the field of methodology.<sup>1</sup> Many early Hadith manuscripts have seen the light of day for the first time. Some of the published works have been edited by renowned Hadith scholars and published afresh.

Included among the newly discovered sources are the *Musannaf* (11 volumes, Beirut 1391/1972) of `Abdur-Razzaq ibn Hammam As-San`ani (d. AH 211/827 CE), *Al-Kitab al-Musannaf fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar* (15 volumes, Hyderabad 1386/1983) of Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. AH 235/849 CE), and *Tarikh al-Madina al-Munawwara* (4 volumes., Jidda, n.d.) of `Umar ibn Shabba.

These three sources and many others have been considered as of eminent importance in the field of Hadith discussions.<sup>2</sup> Among the new methodologies advanced in Hadith studies two approaches must be distinguished: the *isnad* (chain of transmission) analysis of single hadiths, which has proved to be, as Harald Motzki called it, a powerful research tool.<sup>3</sup> This methodology has been extensively applied by the Dutch scholar G. H. A. Juynboll.<sup>4</sup> The second approach has concerned itself with the *matn* (text) analysis of the hadiths, which has been developed by the investigation of textual variants and by the combination of this approach along with the *isnad* analysis. Belonging to this camp are Juynboll, Gregor Schoeler, and Motzki.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, Wael B. Hallaq of McGill University has observed that since Schacht published his monumental work in 1950, scholarly discourse on this matter (i.e., the issue of authenticity) has proliferated. Three camps of scholars may be identified: one attempting to reconfirm his conclusions, and at times going beyond them; another endeavoring to refute them and a third seeking to create a middle, perhaps synthesized, position between the two. Among others, John Wansbrough, and Michael Cook belong to the first camp, while Nabia Abbott, F. Sezgin, M. Azami, Gregor Schoeler and Johann Fück belong to the second. Motzki, D. Santillana, G.H. Juynboll, Fazlur Rahman and James Robson take the middle position.<sup>6</sup>

From the statement of Hallaq it becomes clear how much ink had been spilled in modern discussions in commenting on the problem of authenticity. It was also the bone of contention of early Muslim scholars. This problem has commanded the intensive attention of western scholars. Gustav Weil suggested, as early as 1848, that "a substantial bulk of the Hadith should be regarded as spurious."<sup>7</sup> In 1861 Aloys Sprenger voiced the same view.<sup>8</sup> Ignaz Goldziher concluded that the great majority of Hadith constitute evidence of much later periods. In a similar vein, Joseph Schacht argued that as far as legal hadiths are concerned, they must be assumed fictitious until the contrary is proven.<sup>9</sup> In order not to go in detail on this issue, one has to agree with Hallaq when he argued that the scholarly output concerned with authenticity since Weil raised the issue a century and a half ago is largely, if not totally, pointless.<sup>10</sup>

The comments I have made so far are meant to place the topic in its proper perspective. Of course, a study on Hadith cannot, of necessity, avoid the study of Hadith criticism. In this article I will give a brief account on the discussions on Hadith textual criticism. First I will highlight the approach of some Orientalists to the issue, followed by Muslim discourse on the same issue.

## The State of Orientalist Scholarship on Hadith Textual Criticism

From the Orientalists' side, I will present only the example of the Hungarian Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher. This is due to the fact that most of his views were supported by almost all Orientalists such as Leone Caetani, T. W. Juynboll, Gaston Wiet, Joseph Schacht, N. J. Coulson, Alfred Guillaume, H. A. R. Gibb.

In his book *Muslim Studies* and in a chapter entitled "Reaction Against the Fabrication of Hadiths," Goldziher discussed how the Muslim method of criticism reacted to the phenomenon of Hadith fabrication. He summarized the signs and expressions of this reaction in three different ways. Then he came up with this conclusion:

There was therefore a real danger of the smuggling in the Hadith, a danger which threatened all fields of the Sunnah in religion and public life. Those circles who wished to protect the Hadith from such falsification had to pay particular attention to the character of the authorities and informants on whom the claim of authenticity for each Hadith was based. Only such Hadiths were to be accepted as expressing correctly the religious spirit of the whole community as has been handed down by men whose personal honesty as well as their attitude to the orthodox confession were beyond doubt. Less attention is paid to the contents of the tradition itself than to the authorities in the *isnad*.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, Goldziher held the view that Muslim criticism had chiefly formal points of departure. It is mainly formal points which are decisive for judgment about credibility and authenticity or, as Muslims say, 'health'. Traditions are only investigated in respect of their outward form and judgment of the value of the contents depends on the judgment of the correctness of the *isnad*. If the *isnad* to which an impossible sentence full of inner and outer contradictions is appended withstands the scrutiny of this formal criticism, if the continuity of the entirely trustworthy authors cited in them is complete, if the possibility of their personal communication is established, the tradition is accepted as worthy of credit.<sup>12</sup>

Further, Goldziher argues Nobody is allowed to say: 'because the *matn* contains a logical or historical absurdity I doubt the correctness of the *isnad*' And if under correct *isnads* contradictory traditions are handed down, there begins—if it is not possible to impugn the correctness of one *isnad* in favor of the other—the work of a subtle harmonistic, which often extends to the smallest details.<sup>13</sup> If the contents cannot be reconciled at all an attempt is made—where legal traditions are concerned—to achieve this by the theory of *nasikh wa-mansukh* (abrogation) or mere formal principles are stated which—as it is expressed—are designed to heal 'the illness of the Hadith' (*ilal al-Hadith*) ... Muslim critics have no feeling for even the crudest anachronisms provided that the *isnad* is correct.<sup>14</sup>

Departing from the general paradigm of Western scholarship, I cite some impartial attitudes regarding Hadith textual criticism. R. Marston Speight recognizes the contributions of early traditionists to authenticating the Hadith. In the entry "Hadith" in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Modern Islamic World*, Speight holds the view that the text of the hadith constituted another criterion for testing the authenticity of the material in addition to *isnad* criticism.

John L. Esposito has undertaken the same impartial attitude. Esposito agreed with the most dominant Muslim view that the evaluation of Hadith focused on the chain (*isnad*) of narrators and the subject matter (*matn*).

Writing along the lines of Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), Harald Motzki of the University of Nijmegen tries to challenge the low esteem in which Goldziher and Schacht held the Muslim *isnad* in tackling the problem of dating a hadith by his research approach which may be called "tradition-historical" ("Überlieferungsgeschichtlich").

Recently Motzki edited a book on the biography of the Prophet. He collected some articles read before a colloquium organized on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Department of Languages and Cultures of the Middle East of the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in 1997. He presented an article in which he applied his methodology of *isnad-cum-matn* analysis. Motzki, among others, advanced this approach of Hadith criticism to put the thesis that neither the *isnad* analysis alone nor the *matn* analysis alone is sufficient to sift the authentic traditions from the spurious.

### **Modern Muslim Discourse on Hadith Textual Criticism in Egypt**

It is unfortunate that well-known Muslim writers have seen fit to indulge in the discussions concerned with the issue of textual criticism designed to discredit the existing records of the Hadith. It is a pity that they have unwittingly, and in good faith, fallen victims to the views of non-Muslim writers whose intentions and motives are not altogether free from suspicion.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Rashid Rida (1865–1935)**

Discussions of *matn* criticism can be traced back to Rashid Rida. Rida contends, in an answer to a question sent to *Al-Manar* about, among others, some of the hadiths in Al-Bukhari (d. AH 256/870 CE) and Muslim (d. AH 261/875 CE) that the *muhaddithun* (scholars of Hadith) seldom scrutinized the *matn* of hadiths with regard to their meanings and rulings. They focused much on the *isnad* and the context of the *matns*.<sup>16</sup> Rida maintained the view that many hadiths of sound *isnad* should be submitted to criticism of their contents.<sup>17</sup> Based on this view, he rejected hadiths if they appeared to him to be rationally or theologically objectionable, or if they conflicted with broad principles of the Shari`ah.

To recant his views, Rida stated that Al-Bukhari and Muslim had compiled their most authentic collections with special attention to investigating their *isnad* and *matns*.

#### **Mahmoud Abu Rayyah (1889–1970)**

Abu Rayyah adduced many arguments from different sources to undermine the position of Hadith literature. The result of his research was a book which, as Juynboll noted, tore the Hadith literature to pieces.<sup>18</sup> In the beginning of his career, Abu Rayyah devoted his attention to Arabic belles lettres. Then he read some hadiths narrated by Abu Hurairah, but the interpretation of the hadiths bewildered him. He spent some time investigating these hadiths and came to the conclusion that “the entire Tradition literature should be submitted anew to an extensive examination as to its textual reliability.”<sup>19</sup>

The book referred to above on the Sunnah was entitled *Adwa' `ala as-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyyah*.<sup>20</sup> In this book Abu Rayyah argues that the method of investigating and studying the Hadith was unchangeable. The early traditionists formulated these methods restricting themselves to knowing, as much as they could, the character of the transmitters and their biography. They did not care about whether what they transmitted is correct or not, reasonable or unreasonable.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Abu Rayyah contends that the traditionists did not go beyond the *isnad*; the text was not of much importance. The late traditionists, as well, did not go beyond these limits forwarded by early traditionists. The sequence of such commitment to the early criteria of testing the authenticity of traditions was that the science of transmission became rigid since the early centuries of Islam and it was not subjected to change.<sup>22</sup>

### Ahmad Amin (1886–1954)

In his book *Fajr al-Islam*, Ahmad Amin devoted a chapter to the study of Hadith. Amin stated that

"The scholars laid down various meticulous rules for criticizing and evaluating the Hadith which are too detailed to deal with here. But the significant point is that they have devoted more attention to evaluating the reporter rather than to the report itself. Only rarely do they argue, for example, that what had been attributed to the Prophet Muhammad could not have been authentic because it did not seem reasonable, having regard to the circumstances of the case, that the Prophet would have said such a thing or that the reported thing was in contradiction with well-known and established facts: or that what had been reported as having been said by the Prophet Muhammad was strange having regard to what is known about the background and character of the Prophet. Very little of this type of argument was used and emphasis was placed mainly on attacking personalities and impugning their truthfulness".<sup>23</sup>

### Isma`il Ahmad Adham (1911–1940)

Adham was another transmitter of orientalists' views on the Muslim Tradition. After he had settled in Egypt in 1935, Adham published a book entitled *Min Masadir at-Tarikh al-Islami*.<sup>24</sup> Among the opinions expressed in this treatise is that the scholars of Hadith and its critics did not criticize the texts of hadiths scientifically. This stems from the fact, asserts Adham, that such criticism contradicts their primary principles and their established realities about Hadith. This also, according to Adham, draws doubts on the characters of the hadiths' transmitters including the Companions.<sup>25</sup>

### The Reaction of Muslim Scholars

Muhammad Abdul Rauf of the Islamic Center, Washington, pointed that the remarks about the classical books of Hadith and certain revered narrators made by a modern author<sup>26</sup> brought down on him the wrath of numerous essayists and journalists. Hundred of pages have been written on defending the Sunnah against its deniers, especially with regard to the question of *matn* criticism. However, the most frequently cited writings on defense of the Sunnah are the works of As-Siba`i, *As-Sunnah wa makanatuha fi at-Tashri` al-Islami* and the work of Abu Shuhba, *Difa` `an As-Sunnah wa Radd Shubah al-Mustashriqin wa al-Kuttab al-Mu`asirin*. The work of As-Siba`i is considered to be the best treatise on the subject of Sunnah and Hadith. Such writers asserted that the *muhaddithun* did not neglect criticizing the contents of hadiths while investigating the chain of transmission.

As-Siba`i mentioned, for instance, 15 criteria forwarded by early Hadith critics to sift the authentic hadiths from the spurious as to their contents. For example,

Hadith reports must not conflict with fundamental principles of reason, general principles of wisdom and morality, facts known by direct observation, or fundamental principles of medicine. They must not contain absurd statements or statements contrary to the teaching of more authoritative sources as the Qur'an. They should coincide with historical conditions during the time of the Prophet, and reports of events that have been widely known should be rejected if only a single witness reports them. Finally, they should not encourage vice, contradict reason, or promise large rewards or grave punishments for insignificant acts.<sup>27</sup>

Abu Shuhba criticized both Abu Rayyah and Rida for giving the reason of neglecting the criticism of the contents of the hadiths to the fact that it was not the task of theologians and jurists. Early *muhaddithun* were well informed in both *riwayah* (the science of the chain of transmission) and *dirayah* (the science of the contents of the Hadith). The fact that some jurists attacked some hadiths and refuted them is not because they were more knowledgeable than the *muhaddithun*, but because of their lack of the knowledge of the science of *riwayah* and its criteria and their little practice of it.<sup>28</sup> If there were, proceeds Abu Shuhbah, some transmitters who had been more concerned with compiling and learning by heart the hadiths than understanding the contents, they were very few in number and the *muhaddithun* condemned them for doing so.<sup>29</sup>

Abdul Rauf criticized also the orientalists' allegation and argued that the main purpose of scrutinizing the *isnad* was to preserve the credibility of the *matn*.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, early *muhaddithun* collected the authentic hadiths with utmost care and refused to accept the hadiths which contradicted reason.

Subhi as-Salih devoted a chapter of his interesting study on Hadith to the issue of the form and content of hadiths. He stresses that the early Hadith critics believed that their study of the contents of hadiths and their preservation of Hadith collections were insignificant if they were not corroborated by *dirayah*.<sup>31</sup> It is the science which entails the analytical and historical study of the sayings and doings of the Prophet. It was meant to investigate the conditions of the *rawi* (transmitter) and the *marwi* (transmitted). He excluded the notion which might come out to the beginning researcher that they scrutinized the *isnad* more than the *matn*.<sup>32</sup>

He went on to show that the classification of Hadith into different categories is based primarily of the *isnad* and the *matn*. He referred to the role of the *matn* in sifting out the forged hadiths, since such hadiths are figured out on the basis of the *matn*, for example, weak language, contradicting reason and sense, and expressions of later periods.<sup>33</sup> The same manner of defending the Muslim thesis on *matn* criticism has been followed by As-Siddiq Bashir Nasr of the Faculty of Islamic Da`wah, Tripoli.<sup>34</sup>

Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1917–1996), a prominent spokesman for moderate Islamic revivalism in Egypt, published a book on the Sunnah entitled *As-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah bayna Ahl al-Fiqh wa Ahl al-Hadith*.<sup>35</sup> To show his commitment to classical Hadith criticism, Al-Ghazali cites the following two principles of Hadith *matn* criticism: First, the *matn* must be free from *shudhudh*, which he interprets to mean contradictions with more reliable sources. Second, the *matn* must be free from *'illah qadiyah* (serious defect).<sup>36</sup> These conditions, Al-Ghazali asserts, are eminently trustworthy and a fully sufficient guarantee of the soundness of Hadith, but only if they are rightly applied.

We have seen in the preceding discussion that many orientalists and some modern Muslim writers and critics have argued that the early *muhaddithun* placed emphasis on the chain of transmission while criticizing the hadiths and devoted their concern to serve this purpose, and that they ignored criticizing the contents of hadiths themselves. As I have shown, their views did not find general acceptance and many rejected their propositions and endeavored to show their fallaciousness. We have seen also the reaction of orthodox scholars who tried their best to prove the opposite thesis of such orientalists and modern scholars—that is, that the *muhaddithun* devoted as much attention to the study of the quality of the contents of the hadith as to the chain of reporters.

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1. Harald Motzki, "The Collection of the Qur'an: A Reconsideration of Western Views in the Light of Recent Methodological Developments"; G. H. A. Juynboll, "Some Notes on Islamic First Fuqaha' Distilled from Early Hadith Literature," in *Arabica*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 39 (1992), p. 298.
2. Motzki, "The Collection" p. 16; Fares, *The Collection of the Qur'an*, p. 81.
3. Ibid.
4. See his contribution "Some *isnad*-Analytical Methods Illustrated on the Basis of Several Women Demeaning Sayings from Hadith Literature", in *al-Qantara*, 10 (1989), pp. 343-384; repr. in Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadith*.
5. For the contributions of these three scholars see Motzki, "The Collection," p. 17. However, I can observe that it is very difficult to find much *matn* analysis in Juynboll's contributions except in a few cases.
6. Wael B. Hallaq, "The Authenticity of Prophetic Hadith: A Pseudo-problem", in *Studia Islamica*, 89 (1999), p. 76.
7. Ibid., p. 75.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. To this list I can add other western scholars such as William Muir, Alfred von Kremer and Theodore Nöldeke.
10. Ibid., p. 77.
11. Goldziher, Ignaz, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 2, tr. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern, London, 1971, p. 134.
12. Ibid., pp. 140-141.
13. This statement should not pass in silence, as one can see in it one of the many criteria advanced by Muslim traditionists (*muhaddithun*) to investigate the correctness of the text of the Hadith. Not recognizing this method of harmonization between contradictory hadiths as a means of *matn* criticism indicates Goldziher's difficult understanding of the various classifications of Hadith based on *matn* analysis.
14. Ibid., p. 141; see also W. H. T. Gairdner, "Mohammedan Tradition and Gospel Record", in *Muslim World*, V/4 (1951), pp. 350-51.
15. Muhammad Rajab Al-Bayyumi, "The Authenticity of the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad", in *The Islamic Review*, England, March, 1967, p. 19.
16. Rashid Rida, "Al-Ahadith as-Sahiha allati Zhahara Ghalatu ar-Ruwati fiha", in *Al-Manar*, 29/1 (1928), p. 40.
17. Ibid.; cf. Juynboll, *Authenticity*, p. 139.
18. Juynboll, *Authenticity*, p. 39.
19. Ibid., p. 41.
20. Cairo: Matba`at Dar at-Ta'lif, 1958.
21. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
22. Ibid., p. 5.
23. Amin, *Fajr al-Islam*, p. 260. The same ideas voiced by Amin are to be found in his *ṭeuha al-Islam*, vol. 2, pp. 130-137; idem, *Zuhr al-Islam*, vol. 2, 2nd impr. p. 48.
24. 1st ed., Alexandria: Matba`at Salah ad-Din al-Kubra, 1936.
25. Adham, *Min Maṣadir at-Tarikh al-Islami*, p. 22.
26. He refers here to Abu Rayya. See Muhammad Abdul Rauf, "The Development of the Science of Hadith", in *Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad Period*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 285.

27. As-Siba`i, *As-Sunnah*, pp. 250-251.
28. Abu Shuhba, *Difa`*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 283-4.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Muhammad Abul Rauf, "Al-Mustashriqun wa al-Wahy al-Muhammadi", in *Muslim World*, 58 (1986), p. 558.
31. Subhi as-Salih, *`Ulum al-Hadith wa Mustalahuh*, `Arè wa dirasa, 22nd impr., Beirut: Dar al-`Ilm lil-Malayyin, n.d., p. 278.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
34. As-Siddiq Bashir Nasr, *ëawabit ar-Riwaya `inda al-Muhaddithin*, Tripoli, 1st ed. 1402/1992, pp. 42-7.
35. Cairo: Dar ash-Shuruq, 1989.
36. Al-Ghazali, *As-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah*, p. 19.

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## Announcement

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